

Winterport Business Association Meeting  
Town Office  
Winterport, Maine  
Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Meeting began at 5:15 p.m.

Introductions of those members in attendance was conducted:

Joe Brooks, TG Higgins  
Rebecca Foley, Foley Sand and Gravel  
Deb Newman, Maine Bytes  
Tammy Higgins, TG Higgins  
Phil Pitula, Town Manager  
Stuart White, Woodwork  
Debbie White, Woodwork  
Bernie Littlefield, Bel Portraits  
Susan Rioux, Baldwin Sisters Antiques  
Mike Anderson, Winterport Winery

Minutes of the March 3, 2009 meeting were approved and unanimously accepted.

Tammy Higgins gave the Treasurer's Report and stated the association began with \$282.70, recently received \$75.00 in dues, and now has \$357.70 in the bank account. President Deb Newman said anyone who wants to pay dues now may do so since we have been accruing expenses. Dues will be do beginning in June and are \$25.00 for the year. In addition to collecting dues, it is planned to sell Merchant Membership cards for \$10.00 which individuals (general public and businesses) can buy which would entitle them to a discount at participating businesses in Winterport, Monroe, and Frankfort. Discounts would depend upon each individual business.

The Edge attended the previous Business After Hours and is doing an article on the association. Deb Newman will be sending them our newsletters and pictures to help in promoting. We also hope to get other newspapers to do the same thing to help us promote not only the association in general, but promote the discount cards. The main idea is to get people to shop locally instead of driving to Bangor. Merchants will be giving something to display to show they belong to this program and what they are giving as a discount.

Another item the association is working on is bumper stickers and a business map which we hope to put in hotels and restaurants to promote area businesses.

The executive committee has drafted a proposed set of bylaws and they will be voted on at the June Annual Meeting. These must be displayed a month in advance and must be declared in order for us to qualify as a 501-C-6. Should anyone have any comments or corrections, please notify Deb Newman. These will also be posted on the website to peruse.

Questions were raised as to what the distinction is between a regular membership and an associate membership. Each business has one regular member which has a vote at each meeting. Each business can also have associate memberships but they do not have voting options. This is to avoid too many people from the same business having more votes than another business. Regular membership is \$25.00. Associate membership is \$15.00. The associate members are also for the general public who do not own a business within Winterport/Monroe/Frankfort but who wish to join the association. Town council members can also get full membership as well as the town manager.

Deb Newman put out for discussion, should we just let the public buy the discount cards for \$10.00 and leave it at that instead of buying an associate membership? If they want to then come to the meeting, they could but still could not vote.

March's Business After Hours was a great success. Each one is improving. Mike Anderson of the Winterport Winery (who hosted the event) was asked how he perceived it. Mike stated he was very happy of the turnout and appreciated that the officers were out front greeting people so he and Joan could socialize and talk to the attendees about their business. Approximately 25-30 people attended.

Other businesses that have asked to do the after hours are My Thrill Studio and they want to reserve the month of June. Also, Dr. Hersey had expressed interest in hosting which we will ask him to do in August. It was mentioned that some had asked if this was such a good idea that we should do it once a month. However, most felt that we should stick to once a quarter so as not to do an over kill. Joe Brooks also said he knew of someone who wanted to do it in December.

Putting together a Block party is an idea some people have expressed. Possibly use the parking lot next to the Winterport Commercial House downtown to set up tables, etc. It would be great especially for the businesses who are not located directly on Main Street. Obviously we need to get the businesses of Frankfort and Monroe involved as well. Businesses can bring brochures, maybe the association could get a band to play, etc. Some title concepts were Welcome to Business in Spring, maybe call it a Business Fair, or Meet the Merchants instead of a calling it a block party which sounds too much like just a social event. Businesses that are located on Main Street could also do something special if they choose. Possibly this could be planned for July or August. Anyone else with ideas please let Deb know.

Deb discussed why the Business Fair hasn't happened yet. Potentially we wanted various speakers on business topics to come and talk to our group but we need to be sure there were people attending our meetings. Therefore, it was decided to hold off because we want more members involved so those invited to speak weren't just talking to 2 – 3 people. Possibly members could offer feedback as to who they want to speak to the association or how they want the association to proceed with this.

It was brought up that we somehow need ideas of how to get people involved with our association. Some people don't know how to promote their business or that they are actually shy and don't know how to promote their business. We need to get the word out that the association can help to network businesses especially with the business after hours which is great way to promote individual businesses.

It was asked if the association is going to be promoting itself at the Winterport Music Festival in August. The answer was yes, we had previously discussed having a table there and plan on having some members man the table. It was also mentioned that next year is Winterport's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Therefore, the association should consider getting involved in this event.

It was suggested that maybe in order to build momentum within the association and to get others to attend the meetings we need to get the speakers to come in and discuss pertinent things that businesses are interested about including how to incorporate, what insurances are necessary, etc. If we were to get someone at each meeting to come and speak then maybe attendance at meetings would increase. Deb Newman asked Phil Pitula if he could set up the Small Business Association (SBA) to come and talk to us at the May meeting.

Deb Newman then opened up the meeting to the floor for questions and suggestions. Someone from the floor asked who the present officers were. Deb stated that she was interim President, Tammy Higgins is the Treasurer and Ann Ronco is the Secretary. Right now there is not a Vice President. Nominations will be taken within the next month and at the June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting (which is the annual association meeting) the annual elections will be held.

It was then asked if the association is definitely meeting on Tuesdays or did we switch permanently to Wednesdays? It was stated it was decided at the last Executive Committee that we need to be consistent and stick with Tuesdays unless more people feel they would prefer another day or evening. It was asked if we should

move it to the Victoria Grant Convention Center but it was stated the Town Hall is more convenient for people and everyone knows where it is.

Again, it was noted that the Town Website is available for those people who wish to promote their business events, sales, charity events, etc. Anyone with info please send to Deb and she'd be more than happy to post it on the website. Possibly once we get enough people to send stuff, maybe we could start a blog.

Phil Pitula and Joe Brooks were appointed by Deb to be the nominating committee for the election of officers. Therefore, anyone interested on serving on the Executive Committee should let Phil or Joe know.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5, 2009 at 5:15 p.m. at the Town Office. It was suggested that everyone should bring someone with them! That way we could have more people attend.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

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